



**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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**PRESS RELEASE:
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MCSW LAUNCHES STATEWIDE MA WOMEN'S RESOURCE & REFERRAL
NETWORK (MWRRN)**

Today, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women began providing women and families of the Commonwealth the information and resources they need via its Massachusetts Women's Resource & Referral Network (MWRRN), an interactive, online service. The MWRRN was launched during a press conference at the Massachusetts State House's Grand Staircase at 11 a.m.

Through the MCSW's Web site, the Network – www.mcswnetwork.com - allows users to search for resources they need by geographic region and/or service or topic area either from their home computers, or in the case of those without computers, at public libraries, colleges, community centers, etc.

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is an independent state agency that was legislatively created in 1998 to advance women of the Commonwealth to full equality in all areas of life and to promote their rights and opportunities. The Commission provides a permanent, effective voice for Massachusetts' women and is comprised of 19 diverse members who serve in a voluntary capacity.

One of the charges of the MCSW is to serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to women.

"Our goal with this project is to ultimately create a 'one-stop-shopping' experience for the women of Massachusetts – a place where they can go to reliably get the information and referrals they need for themselves and their families," explained MCSW Executive Director Linda Brantley. "We want to make sure that women from Cape Cod to the Berkshires have the information they need readily available to them in a user-friendly manner.

"We continuously get calls from women across the Commonwealth looking for all

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types of information – how to get free legal advice, how to address domestic violence issues, where to turn to find job training services, where to access preventative health care services. By working with all those agencies who can address these issues we hope to build a resource that will be invaluable to the women of Massachusetts,” Brantley added.

The MCSW sought to include local, community, regional, statewide and in some cases federal resources and providers. “If you can envision a woman going to our web site, seeing a map of Massachusetts, clicking on where she lives or a radius of say 25 miles and entering the type of information she seeks – say legal resources, and up pops a list of everything that is available to her – that is what we are trying to create,” stated MCSW Program Manager Paula Daddona, who is coordinating the project.

This service is in large part being made possible by the generosity of corporate sponsors such as Verizon, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Tufts Health Plan, AstraZeneca, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Savings Bank Life Insurance Company of Massachusetts and many others who have contributed through the MCSW’s annual fundraising activity, the Unsung Heroines Award Luncheon.

The MWRRN will be continuously augmented and improved over time. After the initial launch, the MCSW will investigate and pursue ways to make this valuable resource available in different languages and to those women who may not have access to or be computer proficient.

Organizations and groups wishing to be included in the network may go to the site and register their organization by entering contact information. Letters, including user names and passwords, were mailed to all those organizations that are already in the network. They will be able to log in to the network to update their information as needed.

Questions and requests for additional information should be addressed to MCSW Program Manager Paula Daddona at 617-626-6521.

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